

The format of the family and species discussion is uniform and simple. Dale has not overwhelmed her readers with technical terms. Some essential botanical terms that she uses are defined and illustrated in the preface, and the rest are defined in the glossary. Interesting information on uses of the plants by Indians and early settlers is presented, and the Latin names are translated or discussed giving those who are unfamiliar with scientific names some understanding and an appreciation for the names.

The species are arranged alphabetically (families are alphabetical within their subclass; species, within their family). This facilitates comparisons with some recent floras that also are alphabetical and avoids some of the problems that beginning students have with phylogenetic arrangements, but retains some of the advantages of a phylogenetic system by keeping all the taxa of a family together. Unlike books arranged by flower color, the alphabetical system may be too cumbersome for beginners. Until they learn most of the families, they will rely heavily on the index arranged by flower color for identification.

The technical aspects are well done and have resulted in a very attractive book. Typographical errors or misspellings are almost nonexistent. Photographs are very good, and their colors are as true-to-life as possible. With as many color photographs as there are in this book, it is amazing that only a couple of the photographs came out too dark. The line drawings done by Marianne Wallace are clean and neat, and she has done an admirable job in capturing the likeness of the plants with simple pen strokes and stippling.

There are few flaws or shortcomings. One error is the description of the scientific name in the preface where the specific epithet is incorrectly stated to be the species name. Trees are treated separately at the end after the section on wildflower trips, and there they appear to be a late addition, but one that certainly will be appreciated. The second index, which is alphabetical by family, is superfluous because the arrangement is the same as the text. The exclusion of most of the wind pollinated taxa (grasses, sedges, and rushes) is a shortcoming, but one not uncommon for guide books. It is unfortunate that these plants, which are often common and distinctive, are ignored even though a photograph or illustration can make identification of many of these species easy.

Nancy Dale has done a fine piece of work. *Flowering Plants, the Santa Monica Mountains* will undoubtedly become a very popular field guide to the range and other coastal sage scrub and low elevation chaparral communities of southern California.—BARRY A. PRIGGE, Dept. Biology, Univ. California, Los Angeles 90024.

A Flora of San Diego County, California. By R. MITCHEL BEAUCHAMP. xii + 241 pp. Sweetwater River Press, P.O. Box 985, National City, CA 92050. 1986. ISBN 0-931950-01-5, \$28.95 (hardcover); ISBN 0-931950-00-7, \$22.95 (paperbound).

Mitchel Beauchamp grew up in San Diego County, interested in natural history since high school. He started this flora for a master's thesis but had to cut back to a more time-realistic goal. Working since as an environmental consultant in the County, he has kept up with local botany, finished writing the flora, and formed his own company to publish it. His wife input the text to a word processor, and the rest was almost automatic. It is a well printed book that a new publisher can be proud of.

One chapter, mainly from Thomas A. Oberbauer, tells of plant communities in the County; and Oberbauer's map, spread over eight pages, shows where they are. A short chapter on floral diversity and endemism discusses "floral districts" and lists significant plants.

The bulk of the book, an even 200 pages, succinctly catalogues the vascular flora of 1980 species (1516 native) and 230 lesser taxa (225 native)—a remarkable total for one county. Keys are adapted from Munz's *A flora of southern California*. Under each major subdivision, the families, genera, and species are alphabetic, for easy

finding; and an index gives quick reference. Running heads show family and generic names, but not alternately on left and right. Entries are short and concise, commonly just two to four lines. Following the name (starred if the plant is not native) are any pertinent synonyms and usually a common name. Then come statements of abundance, habitat or plant community, region in the County, and elevation, followed by a dozen or so representative localities or, for less common plants, as many as known. Last are flowering months and chromosome numbers. Type localities are given if in the County, for rejected as well as for accepted taxa. There are few other notes.

Mitchel Beauchamp knows his plants in the field, keeps up on names, has combed several herbaria for records, and is thorough and consistent in his catalogue. The last County flora was Ethel Bailey Higgins' *Annotated distributional list of ferns and flowering plants of San Diego County, California*, 1949, long out of print and longer out of date. Everyone interested in San Diego County plants will welcome this up-to-date and basically much better successor.—REID MORAN, Emeritus Curator of Botany, San Diego Museum of Natural History, Box 1390, Balboa Park, San Diego, CA 92112.

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